PNC Foundation To Partner With Sesame Workshop To Address Racial Justice Through $6.2 Million Grant

Building on a 17-year partnership, Sesame and PNC aim to equip young children to envision a brighter future without racism.



Coming Together: Addressing Racial Justice through Early Education

PITTSBURGH, May 19, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- The PNC Foundation and Sesame Workshop announced today a $6.2 million initiative to address racial justice through early childhood education. Funded by the PNC Foundation and building on the thriving and impactful 17-year partnership between Sesame Workshop and PNC Grow Up Great®, the newest phase of this collaboration will focus on racial justice and providing children with the foundation for kindness, fairness, and respect, in the critical early years of child development. The collaboration will be part of Sesame Workshop's *Coming Together* racial justice initiative.

Studies have shown that children notice differences in race as early as six months old, and they form judgments and assumptions based on race by age three. This collaboration will produce some of the first resources to address the development of cognitive skills in the context of racial justice.

"What we're learning through our research and partners is that early childhood educators and community providers want to put in the work to address racism, but they don't have the tools to do so," said Dr. Jeanette Betancourt, senior vice president of U.S. Social Impact at Sesame Workshop. "We're aiming to bridge that gap—not only to train and equip teachers and providers, but to partner with families and provide tools to better prepare children for school and life. During preschool, children explore their sense of self and they are curious about the world around them. Together with the PNC Foundation, we want to leverage children's vision, curiosity, and imagination in creating a future world without racism."

Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit behind *Sesame Street*, has served in an advisory role to PNC since the 2004 inception of PNC Grow Up Great, a $500 million multi-year, bilingual early education initiative. Over the years, the two have partnered to create resources that help promote children's emotional and academic development.

"Amid the racial justice movement, both Sesame Workshop and PNC felt a responsibility to do more to effect change in ways that we can. PNC announced a $1 billion commitment to help end systemic racism and support the economic empowerment of Black Americans and low- and moderate-income communities, and Sesame Workshop is directly addressing and prioritizing racial justice through new content and programming," said Sally McCrady, chair and president of the PNC Foundation. "We're building on our successful collaboration to advance our shared commitment. The combination of our collective strengths will yield a strategic, informed approach to help children develop the skills to imagine, and ultimately build, a more equitable future."

The resources, which will be available in English and Spanish, will integrate *Sesame Street*'s research-driven, playful learning approach to the school readiness skills that are highlighted in quality early childhood and community-based programs, as well as promoting cross-collaboration among early care sectors and increasing family engagement. Primarily, the resources will:

- Foster the social-emotional skills normally developed in classroom learning such as empathy, kindness, fairness, cooperation, and conflict resolution.
- Develop racial literacy by encouraging open, honest conversations both in school and at home that build self-identity, including developing race awareness, driving understanding and respect of differences, motivating perspective taking, recognizing unfairness, and promoting age-appropriate ways to create a fairer preschool community.
- Celebrate the idea that children can lead a new way of thinking and help everyone to imagine a world without racial injustice through their sense of curiosity, fairness, and kindness.

These bilingual resources will be developed over a four-year period and include digital and print story and activity books, videos, games, teacher and provider education, and tools to engage families. They will be available throughout PNC's footprint, which will be significantly expanded across the country with PNC's acquisition of BBVA USA, that is currently pending, subject to the satisfaction of customary closing conditions.

Sesame Workshop is the nonprofit media and educational organization behind *Sesame Street*, the pioneering television show that has been reaching and teaching children since 1969. Today, Sesame Workshop is an innovative force for change, with a mission to help kids everywhere grow smarter, stronger, and kinder. We're active in more than 150 countries, serving vulnerable children through a wide range of media, formal education, and philanthropically funded social impact programs, each grounded in rigorous research and tailored to the needs and cultures of the communities we serve. For more information, please visit www.sesameworkshop.org.

The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group (www.pnc.com), actively supports organizations that provide services for the benefit of communities in which it has a significant presence. The foundation focuses its philanthropic mission on early childhood education and community and economic development, which includes the arts and culture. Through Grow Up Great, its signature cause that began in 2004, PNC has created a bilingual $500 million, multi-year initiative to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life.

CONTACT:

Marcey Zwiebel
(412) 762-4550
media.relations@pnc.com

SOURCE PNC Foundation

Additional assets available online: Photos (1)

https://pnc.mediaroom.com/2021-05-19-PNC-Foundation-To-Partner-With-Sesame-Workshop-To-Address-Racial-Justice-Through-6-2-Million-Grant